his position was critical. As to the immediate future, Russia and Austria were in front, and if he should give unsatisfactory answers to the envoy from Berlin, Prussia would be in his rear. All depended, therefore, on a quick and decisive struggle with the two allied empires. During his advance to Vienna, Napoleon, without a single conflict which might justly be called a pitched battle, had maneuvered both Austrians and Russians out of his way. By serious inadvertence he had suffered the division of Mortier, left isolated on the left bank of the Danube, to be annihilated at Diirrenstein; and through Murat's vainglorious stubbornness, Kutusoff had escaped with the Russian contingent. Nevertheless, as has been told, the main French army had, by the most amazing marches, reached Vienna on November fourteenth, and the same day Napoleon had established his headquarters in the neighboring palace of Francis at Schonbrunn. Murat was hurrying forward with his cavalry, and the divisions of Suchet and Lannes were close on the heels of Murat. If these should attack one Russian flank while a second army turned the other, KutusofFs force could be dispersed. But two important duties demanded immediate attention. The troops had been scattered over a wide territory to live on the country; now they must be gathered in to strike. It was consequently essential that regular provision-trains be organized and supplied. Both these tasks were pursued with untiring zeal. "They say I have more talent than some others," Napoleon wrote to Marmont on November fifteenth, "and yet to defeat an enemy whom I am accustomed to beat I feel I can never have enough troops. I am calling in all I can unite."

Murat pushed onward after the retreating Russians, and in spite of their tremendous marches overtook them